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Prominent Federal Judges Bazelon, Gesell Die

Gerhard A. Gesell presided over several First Amendment cases.

■ David L. Bazelon, 83, a retired chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals here, and U.S. District Judge Gerhard A. Gesell, 82, two of the most influential members of the federal judiciary in the last half-century, died at their homes Friday. Among the historic cases Gesell heard in his 25 years as a trial judge were the issue of the Pentagon Papers and the prosecutions of many Watergate-era defendants. Bazelon, named to the appeals court in 1949, was notably influential as a champion of the rights of the accused, and for his efforts to open the criminal courts to the insights of modern psychiatry and sociology.

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David L. Bazelon was a leader in applying psychiatry to criminal law.